

Discussion on Housing

At this federal-provincial conference, we should find the means to facilitate urban renewal. Obviously, this is an extremely difficult question in 1967. Naturally, housing is very, very heavily taxed locally, municipal and school taxes are excessively high not only in the province of Ontario but also in the province of Quebec. I believe that the average of municipal and school taxes in Quebec is between \$325 and \$350 per property.

This federal-provincial conference should also provide through the Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation increased amounts to provincial and municipal governments so as to give this area a necessary blood transfusion if the crisis is to be thoroughly and efficiently contained.

Mr. Speaker, it was several times that the present government should show more leadership, more decision in some areas. Naturally, we will be told that this area is not under jurisdiction of the federal government but in view of the fact that the Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation has for several years spent millions for the construction of residential housing, I think it would be fair and reasonable that the hon. minister be given an opportunity to exert his leadership and bring the parties involved together to consider most seriously the whole question at a federal-provincial conference.

During the debate, the minister, replying to the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Hees), I think, said that our chartered banks, having been granted new powers by the legislation adopted last year, are indicating some interest in making mortgage loans. The minister quoted figures. The minister said that according to his information chartered banks were lending nearly 10 million dollars a month. But I do not know who is getting these loans nor what banks are granting them. Possibly, they are being made in the major urban centers? But as far as we the rural folks are concerned, I must tell the hon. minister that several times during the summer people came to ask me how this new Bank Act could be used to secure mortgage loans. In all the cases of which I was told about, none of the people has obtained a loan from a chartered bank. Now I speak of the rural environment in which I live. The statistics quoted by the minister possibly referred to urban areas.

But I must tell the minister that in rural areas the banks, thanks to new powers granted them last year, that is the authorization to

make mortgage loans, refuse to give explanations and refuse also to grant mortgage loans.

I would therefore urge the minister to bring pressure to bear on our financial institutions, on banks, not only in large cities or in urban areas but also in rural areas, so that they may, under the new powers we granted them, meet the requirements of consumers.

Of course, it is more profitable for the banks to lend on notes. In view of the fact that they availed themselves of their privileges and were given the right to develop, to administer themselves financially, I think that the government should threaten to impose sanctions on the chartered banks and those who will not lend on mortgages.

The province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker, is of course faced with that problem just like the other provinces. That explains why the Quebec government set up what is called the Quebec Housing Corporation, thanks to an act passed in 1967. In addition to dealing with urban renewal and low-rent housing, it has a five-year plan to develop the two sectors I mentioned.

This work is performed in co-operation with municipalities and private companies. Moreover, the province of Quebec, through that housing corporation, borrows funds from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in order to attain those purposes. I am advised that in accordance with the five-year plan of the Quebec Housing Corporation an amount of \$100 million is provided for urban renewal and \$300 million for the construction of low-cost housing.

But, Mr. Speaker, is it necessary for me to tell you that those are minimum amounts. In fact, Quebec is dealing with an unusual problem of slums; it has been mentioned in this house that Montreal, the metropolitan city of Canada, had taken advantage of only one comprehensive plan for low-cost housing since the Quebec minister of finance, Mr. Dozois, had developed such a plan. It has been called the Dozois plan in Montreal.

What I find most strange, is the fact that we are trying at the present time, to rack our brains, in order to decide what should be done with the site of the world fair. If we have spent millions of dollars in an effort to spread abroad our Canadian culture, I do think that this administration, that of the city of Montreal and the Quebec government should consider the fact that the site of the world fair would lend itself splendidly to the

[Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix).]